Your Role in Investigations and Assessments

Caseworker Readiness Shadowing Activity

This section requires the caseworker to access a copy of his or her job description, and the agency’s policies and procedures regarding job responsibilities in specific program areas.

Following is a general description of the roles and responsibilities of an investigation or assessment worker.

Investigations / Assessments

1. Make an initial contact within the required time frame.
   - If the alleged child victim is believed to be in immediate danger of serious harm, face to face contact with the child must be attempted within one hour of the report being screened in.
   - In the case of a non-emergency report, an initial face to face or telephone contact must be attempted with a principal of the report (i.e. caretaker, alleged victim or alleged perpetrator) or a collateral source who has knowledge of the alleged victim’s current condition, within 24 hours.
   - If the non-emergency contact was not made with the alleged child victim, an initial face to face contact with the child must be attempted within 72 hours of the report being screened in.
   - If the caseworker attempted a face to face contact with the alleged child victim and at least one caretaker and one or more of the parties were unavailable, at least one additional face to face attempt must be made within four working days from the time the report was screened in.

2. The initial contact with the alleged child victim will be for the purpose of assessing the child’s safety and conducting an interview with the child.

3. Face-to-face interviews must occur with each child residing in the home, for the purpose of:
   - Evaluating each child’s condition
   - Determining whether the child is safe
   - Obtaining the child’s explanation about the allegations contained in the report (unless the child has insufficient verbal skills)

4. Face-to-face interviews must occur with the alleged perpetrator and every adult residing in the home, for the purpose of:
   - Assessing their knowledge of the allegations
• Observing the interaction between the child victim and caretaker
• Obtain relevant information regarding the child’s safety and risk

5. Complete the Safety Assessment within four working days from the time the report was screened in.

6. Face-to-face or telephone interviews must be conducted with every person identified in the investigation / assessment as having relevant information regarding the safety of and risk to the alleged child victim.

7. As necessary:
   • Take photographs of the child and/or the child’s environment
   • Have an interpreter present for those hearing impaired and/or lacking proficiency in English
   • Follow the requirements for special investigations (e.g. out of home, third party, stranger danger, deserted child, medically withholding treatment, dependent child)
   • Secure medical evaluations
   • Request the assistance of law enforcement
   • Gather relevant case records (e.g. school, mental health, medical)
   • Request the assistance and/or involvement of the county prosecutor
   • Make a referral to Help Me Grow

8. Complete and compile all case record documentation such as:
   • Narratives
   • Transcripts of interviews
   • Safety assessments
   • Family assessment
   • Additional reports/records
   • Release forms
   • Written justifications or waivers for uncompleted investigative / assessment activities, if any

9. Provide a disposition of the case (i.e. whether the allegations are substantiated, unsubstantiated or indicated)

10. Within two working days of the completion of the assessment / investigation:
    • Notify the child victim and child’s caretaker of the disposition and final case decision.
• Notify the alleged perpetrator in writing, of the report disposition, the right to appeal, and information about the appeal process.

**Shadowing Activity and Guide:**

In your New Worker Orientation, you were introduced to "shadowing", accompanying other staff members as they go about their work in order to get a first-hand view of child welfare experiences. To review this process, go to: [Orientation: Shadowing](#)

Now that you are focused on Investigations and Assessments, meet with your supervisor to schedule a shadowing experience with an veteran agency worker in that area. Plan to meet afterwards as well to debrief.

1. Begin by making sure you and your supervisor have discussed the roles and responsibilities in investigations and assessments, including but not limited to:
   - Conducting investigative interviews
   - Techniques for working with young children
   - Collaborating with community partners during investigations
   - Sexual abuse protocols
   - Using the Memorandum of Understanding and informal protocols for coordinating the investigations and prosecution of child maltreatment
   - Conducting special investigations
   - Dealing with resistant clients
   - When to interview children without prior consent from the parent or caretaker
   - Agency protocols for conducting safety, risk, and family strengths and needs assessments
   - Agency forms and computer programs for documenting investigation/assessment activities
   - Flagging or identifying safety alerts for the next assigned worker

2. Develop a list of questions you would like to have answered and investigation activities you would like to observe in your shadowing experience. For example, you may want to observe how information is gathered, how families are engaged in the process, how CAPMIS tools are used to guide and support decision-making, etc.

3. In addition to discussing the roles and responsibilities in investigations and assessments as listed above, ask your colleague:
   - What are the greatest challenges about investigations and assessments?
   - What do you find the most rewarding?
   - How long did it take for you to feel confident in your job?
   - What recommendations do you have for additional training?